King County's SciFYI
King County
Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Water and Land Resources Division
A digest of current natural science issues in King County
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Rejuvenation

By: Ciera Boyd & Duke Nguyen

We worked at two project locations to rejuvenate and improve their environmental conditions. One project site was called Cemetery Pond and the other the Carlin Levee.

The Cemetery Pond project is located in King County's May Valley area. We were there to remove the trash and weeds from around the Cemetery Pond bog, much of which had been thrown there carelessly.

Students filling buckets with mulch to place around plants.

The Carlin Levee project site is located between the Raging River and the Preston Fall City Road. What was interesting about this area is the levee that was built in 1963, when people thought that a straight moving river was "healthier" for the environment, and to keep it from flooding housing areas, was removed and set back to enlarge the flood plain. This was done to help create more natural river processes in the Raging River.

One of our discoveries was that a straight moving river could be harmful to the environment and to the creatures that live in it and depend on it. Straightening the river had caused the river to over flow to one side only, making it harder for plants on the other side to gain water and making it more difficult for the animals that live in the water, like salmon, to survive in the now fast-moving waters.

On both projects, we had to put mulch around the native plants. The mulching was difficult in that we had to carry a bucket of mulch up and down a hill for every plant.

Mulch is the byproduct of organic waste from plants and weeds and bark that has been ground down. We pulled the grass and weeds from the surrounding area around the plant, then placed the mulch in a circle around the plant with a one-inch open space between the plant and the mulch for the plant to have room to grow.

At the Cemetery Pond bog site we removed trash and invasive plants—such as blackberry and the common reed. We were able to make more room to plant native trees and then mulch around them to keep weeds from growing back around them and to

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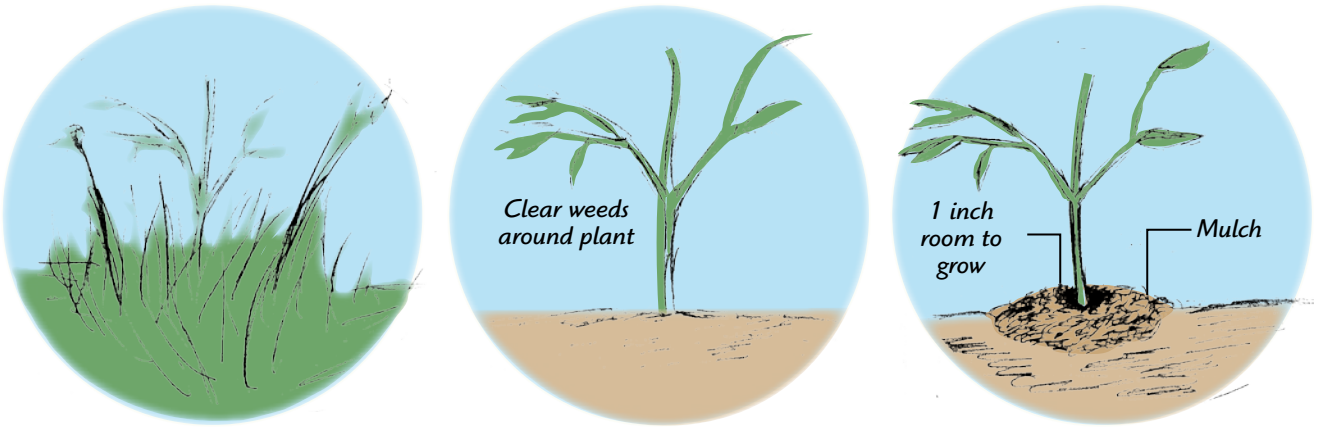

Illustrations by Ciera Boyd & Duke Nguyen

keep moisture from leaving the plants. With all of this we will hopefully improve the overall health of the Cemetery Pond bog.

In both locations we worked with Allison Bafallo a King County intern forester. We were able to mulch about 20 or 30 plants at both sites, and remove most of the invasive blackberry vines.

While we were at the Carlin Levee on our lunch break, we decided to sit by the river and cool our feet while we ate. After a while we began to notice what, at first, looked like tiny pieces of bark moving around in the water. Upon closer inspection we noticed that the pieces of bark were actually bugs that were living in the water, and had taken some bark and incorporated it into their protective shell.

Immediately, we remembered something that we had heard at a presentation by staff of King County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks panel discussions. They had mentioned that there was a type of bug that only lived in the highest quality of water, and the bug would take things from the bottom of the river, pond, lake, etc. and use it to create a shell for itself.

Does this mean that the Snoqualmie River water is drinkable?

Perhaps.

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